3: Imperial Gazetteer G-3 (1889-95) 1909 AV1 Kashmir AV1

are sometimes seen. Geese are found in vast flocks on the Wular Lake in the winter, and there are at least thirteen kinds of duck. The goosander and smew are also found on the Wular Lake. There are six species of eagles, four of falcons, and four of owls. Kingfishers, hoopoes, bee-eaters, night-jars, swifts, cuckoos, woodpeckers, parrots, crows in great variety, choughs, starlings, orioles, finches (12 species), buntings, larks, wag-tails, creepers, tits, shrikes, warblers (14 species), thrushes (20 species), dippers, wrens, babbling thrushes, bulbuls, fly-catchers, and swallows are all familiar birds. 136

Among the reptiles there are two poisonous snakes, the *gunas* and the *pohur*, the bite of which is often fatal. [262].

Fish forms an important item in the food of the Kashmīris. Vigne noticed only six different kinds, but Lawrence enumerated thirteen.

Temperature. As the elevation varies from 1,200 feet at Jammu and 3,000 feet in the Indus valley at Bunji and Chilās to 25,000 and 26,000 feet on the highest mountain peaks, the State presents an extraordinary variety of climatic conditions. The local variations of temperature depend chiefly upon situation (i.e. whether in a valley or on the crest of a mountain range), elevation, and the amount of the winter snowfall and the period and depth of the snow accumulation. The effect of position in a valley or a mountain crest is shown by comparing the temperatures of Murree and Srīnagar. The Murree observatory is about 1,200 feet higher than the Srīnagar observatory. The mean maximum day temperature in January at Murree is 7° higher than at Srīnagar, and the mean minimum night temperature 9° higher. On the other hand, in the hottest month (June) the maximum day temperature is 1° lower at Murree than at Srīnagar, while the minimum night temperatures are almost identical. The diurnal range is 2° less in January, 7° less in June, and 14° less in October at Murree than at Srīnagar. The slow movement of the air from the higher elevations into valleys more or less completely shut in by mountains tends to depress temperature at valley stations both by day and night considerably below that at similar elevations on the crest of the Outer Himālayas, and to increase the diurnal range most largely in the dry clear months of October and November, when the sinking down of the air from the adjacent mountains has its greatest effect, and is supplemented by rapid radiation from the ground. The effect of snow accumulation in valleys in reducing temperature is very marked. At Drās and Sonāmarg, where the accumulation is usually large, the 132

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taken. Although many pilgrims were detained by the authorities still many Sadhus and other enthusiastic pilgrims proceeded despite warnings and met with untold miseries and privations. Some lives were lost due to extreme cold and starvation.

1.

In the Jammu Province, the vagaries of heaven displayed themselves at their worst during this year when the rains which bailed the hopes of the tiller at the time of the sowing season descended on earth in unprecedented fury in the month of Bhadon 1985 causing every river, stream, rivulet and nallah to rise to unheard of heights bringing wholesale destruction to all life and property that came before the fatal current. The loss was immense. Crops were washed away, cattle drowned, bridges and buildings destroyed and some human life swallowed up by the furious floods.

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The *Rabbi* crops had a severe blast in the bargain. The general condition of the people was on the whole average, public health being comparatively better on account of absence of any epidemic excepting the usual malarial fever which is regarded an every day affair and not viewed as a serious thing. The prices of food staples continued stationery and import of grains into Mirpur district was kept free of customs duty.

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Fasli year 1985-86.—For the Kashmir Province the year 1985-86, however, started with propitious signs and the rainfall being sufficient and well distributed in the earlier part of the year resulted in good crops all round and bade fair to make up for the misfortunes of the previous year, but Heavens intervened and all hopes were blighted by heavy rains in Bhadon bringing in their train floods of the same magnitude as of the last year followed by immense loss to crops, cattle, and houses. Scarcity of fodder caused much suffering to the livestock. Muzaffarabad district had well distributed rains with fairly good crops. Relief measures necessitated by two consecutive floods of 1985 and 1986 were continued by the Government by sanction of liberal grants for Taccavi (Rs. 167,613), restoration of the means of communications and relief works. The Government also obtained on loan the services of a flood expert whose scheme involving an expenditure of 24 lacs has been sanctioned by the Government.

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The prices of *Kharif* crops continued high while those of the *Rabi* suffered some reduction. The prices of food stuffs are generally dependent in this province on the price of Shali which is the staple food of the Kashmiries. Hence the issue price of Shali for the city requirement which is the only market of grain is authoritatively fixed by the Granaries Department; the rates of food stuffs in general remained normal in the face of the embargo laid on the export of food stuffs. The provinces had no epidemic during the year.

In the Jammu Province prices were lower and import of grain into Mirpur continued free of customs duty. Timely and sufficient rains yielded good crops although the floods repeated their visit on a smaller scale in Bhadon 1986. The visitation of locusts in Kathua, Udhampur and Mirpur districts was a great nuisance as it destroyed 378 acres of crop in Mirpur tehsil although no appreciable damage was done in other tehsils. Special measures adopted by the Government aided by the willing co-operation of the zamindars went a great way in minimising the damage. The public health was comparatively better as there was no epidemic outbreak.

Government measures continued to check the growth of venereal diseases in the hilly tehsils of Jammu. The Government besides specially building the Zaildars, Lambardars and Chowkidars responsible for keeping a strict watch over cases of abduction of women also deputed religious preachers to enlighten the public opinion against such immoral practices. The prices of grains remained gradually higher. With the inauguration of Agriculturists Relief Regulation the lot of the zamindars underwent a considerable improvement.

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Fasli year 1986-87.—In Kashmir valley the rainfall was excessive compared with the preceding year resulting in water logging of considerable areas in the

4. [Details of category III, p. 329 for corrections—Analyst]